

Message Text

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21

ACTION ACDA-19

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1237

SECDEF/WASHDC

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR/SHAPE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 0402

MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

EO: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: BRITISH MBFR REP'S CONVERSATION WITH
SOVIET DEPREP SMIRNOVSKY 15 JANUARY

THE BRITISH REP (ROSE) CIRCULATED THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT TO THE
AD HOC GROUP ON 16 JANUARY OF A CONVERSATION HELD WITH AMBASSADOR
SMIRNOVSKY THE PREVIOUS DAY.

CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR SMIRNOVSKY ON 15 JANUARY 1974

1. SMIRNOVSKY CALLED ON ME AT HIS REQUEST. HE WAS UNACCOMPANIED
AND SO, THEREFORE, WAS I.

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2. I ASKED WHAT PROSPECTS HE SAW FOR MAKING PROGRESS. HE ADMIT-

TED THAT THERE WAS A LARGE GAP BETWEEN OUR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS. BUT HE SAW NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD NOT BE BRIDGED, IF THE POLITICAL WILL WAS THERE. I SAID POLITICAL WILL WAS CERTAINLY IMPORTANT, BUT WE WERE DEALING WITH OBJECTIVE MILITARY FACTS. I REHEARSED THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE COMMON CEILING FOR GROUND FORCES.

3. SMIRNOVSKY SAID IT WAS ABUSRD TO OMIT NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WHICH PRESENTED THE GREATEST DANGER. I SAID OF COURSE IT WAS COMMON GROUND BETWEEN ALL THE PARTICIPANTS THAT WE WISHED TO AVOID NUCLEAR WAR. BUT THE SOURCE OF INSTABILITY IN CENTRAL EUROPE WAS WARSAW PACT SUPERIORITY IN GROUND FORCES AND TANKS. SMIRNOVSKY SAID HE WAS UNCONVINCED BY MY ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXCLUSION OF NUCLEAR AND AIR FORCES AND FOR CONCENTRATION ON GROUND FORCES; THIS WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE AGREED SUBJECT MATTER OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH INCLUDED ALL FORCES AND ARMAMENTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE. THEY MUST THEREFORE BE COVERED IN THE REDUCTIONS. ARGUMENTS RELATING TO FORCES OUTSIDE THE AREA WERE NOT RELEVANT; WE WERE TALKING ABOUT FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

4. ON PHASING, SMIRNOVSKY ASKED WHAT ASSURANCE THE WARSAW PACT WOULD HAVE THAT THERE WOULD BE A PHASE 2 IF THEY WERE TO AGREE TO PHASE 1. I SAID THE COMMITMENT BY BOTH SIDES TO THE COMMON CEILING GOAL AND TO THE COMPLETION OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS A COMMON CEILING IN PHASE 2 SHOULD PROVIDE ADEQUATE ASSURANCE. SMIRNOVSKY SAID THAT, IN THEORY, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO INTRODUCE PHASING INTO A SINGLE AGREEMENT; ONE COULD ATTACH CONDITIONS FOR MOVING ON TO THE NEXT STAGE. THE ESSENTIAL THING WAS POLITICAL DECISION TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP WHICH COULD BE A SMALL ONE. I ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER A FIRST STEP RELATING TO US AND SOVIET FORCES ONLY. THIS BROUGHT US BACK TO THE QUESTION OF ASSURANCES.

5. SMIRNOVSKY ASKED WHY WE WERE SO STRONGLY OPPOSED TO INDIVIDUAL CEILINGS FOR NATO COUNTRIES. I EXPLAINED THE IMPORTANCE TO US OF DOING NOTHING TO PREJUDICE POSSIBLE FUTURE EUROPEAN DEFENCE COOPERATION. HE ASKED WHY THE US AND SOVIET UNION SHOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT INDIVIDUAL CEILINGS IF THE EUROPEANS DID NOT. I SAID CEILINGS WOULD BE FIXED IN PHASE 1 FOR US AND SOVIET FORCES: AT THE END OF PHASE 2 THE TOTAL OF ALL FORCES ON EACH SIDE WOULD BE LIMITED TO THE COMMON CEILING. SMIRNOVSKY EXPRESSED DOUBTS

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ABOUT THE MEANS BY WHICH A COMMON CEILING, WITHOUT NATIONAL SUBCEILINGS, WOULD BE CONTROLLED. HE SUGGESTED THE UK WOULD HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS; WE WOULD HAVE NO NATIONAL CEILING NOR WOULD WE HAVE TO DISBAND ANY FORCES WE WITHDREW.

6. ON PROCEDURES, SMIRNOVSKY SAID WE SHOULD HAVE TO CONTINUE WITH PLENARIES. I ASKED WHETHER HE ENVISAGED ONE A WEEK OR ONE A FORTNIGHT. HE SAID WHY NOT TWO A WEEK, BUT AGREED WHEN I SAID

THIS INVOLVED A LOT OF WORK WITHOUT LEAVING MUCH TIME FOR OTHER CONTACTS. HE SAW NO VALUE IN WORKING GROUPS, WHICH HE THOUGHT WOULD BE AS INHIBITING AS PLENARIES. BUT, ALTHOUGH GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY, HE MADE NO REFERENCE TO EMISSARIES. HE APPEARED TO FAVOUR THE IDEA OF AN INCREASE IN INFORMAL BILATERAL CONTACTS.

7. THROUGHOUT THIS CONVERSATION, SMIRNOVSKY DID NOT DIRECTLY ATTACK EITHER THE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT OR THE IDEA OF PHASING. NOR DID HE PRESS THE POINT ABOUT INCLUDING ALL COUNTRIES IN REDUCTIONS FROM THE START. BUT HE PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO REDUCE AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES (WITHOUT IMPLYING ANY PREFERENCE FOR THE FORMER). AND HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT, IF ANY FORM OF PHASED AGREEMENT WERE TO BE CONTEMPLATED, POSITIVE ASSURANCES THAT REDUCTIONS OF EUROPEAN FORCES WOULD TAKE PLACE IN A SECOND PHASE WOULD BE REQUIRED. END TEXT.HUMES

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